

## **2022-23 Mississippi State Men's Basketball Quotes**

### **Mississippi State vs. Marquette– November 21, 2022 [Fort Myers Tip Off]**

#### **Mississippi State Head Coach Chris Jans**

***Q: It was definitely a defensive battle, but what was Marquette doing to slow you down on offense?***

**CJ:** “Our offense is a work in progress. I’ve got a lot of respect for Shaka [Coach Smart], their staff and their players. We knew they were going to come out and compete at a high level. They do a good job of getting into the ball, forcing you away from the basket, turning you over and getting a lot of deflections.”

“They had a great plan against Tolu Smith. It seemed like at least two or three guys were guarding him anytime he got into the paint. They were all in on the gameplan, and it was an effective one. We really struggled early against it. Tolu had three turnovers in the first half but only one in the second. What I liked most was that he was a willing passer out of it, and he found the open man. He had been scoring a lot of points this season. He wasn’t tonight, but he still had six assists, and 16 rebounds.”

“They were giving us problems. Our offense is a work in progress, but we were 7-for-16 from three. We didn’t take a ton of three’s, and we rebounded the ball offensively really well. We knew turnovers could be a potential issue tonight.”

#### ***Q: How does it feel to be 5-0?***

**CJ:** “[It] sounds good. We knew this was going to be a battle. I was anxious, and I was excited to play this game. I kept telling our guys that we’re going to find out where we are at. Whether we won or lost, we’re going to get some exposure. We’re going to figure out how to get better from this. We needed to. We won the four games previously by decent amounts for the most part. We needed to play a team that looked like us and had athletes like us.”

“I didn’t know how we would play. It’s a neutral site game, but Marquette had a lot of fans here. It didn’t feel like a neutral site. I told our guys that this was perfect. It’s us against the world, and that’s the way we want to have it. We’re going to have to stay together. They came back hard and overtook the lead a couple of times. I loved the response we had for the most part. A big basket was Dashawn Davis’s layup. He was limping and had not been practicing or playing. I thought that was a big basket in the game.”

#### ***Q: You had 10 missed free throws, but can you talk about Dashawn [Davis] and Eric [Reed Jr.] making the four at the end that mattered?***

**CJ:** “That’s a problem for us, and we’ve got to figure that out. I’m going to be fired as the free throw coach. I’ve been working with Tolu one-on-one a little extra, and I’m not doing a very good job. He was 1-for-6, and I’m going to have to take all the blame for that. I thought I could fix him a little bit, and it didn’t work out. Eric Reed [Jr.] made some big ones, and Shak [Shakeel Moore] made a free throw. We tried to get Eric the ball down the stretch. He was playing with a lot of confidence, and it worked out.”

#### **Forward Tolu Smith and Guard Eric Reed Jr.**

##### ***Q: Eric, what was going through your mind on those last free throws?***

**ER:** “It was just practice. I practice my free-throw routine every day. It was just keeping my composure and my mind set. I had to get my team the win.”

***Q: How do you block out the pressure at the line?***

**ER:** "I think about shooting when nobody is there. It's the same as practice, and that's how I think. We take practice as seriously as the game."

***Q: Did tonight feel like a road game given how many Marquette fans showed up?***

**TS:** "It was definitely a road game. The fans that came, we enjoyed them. We heard the sixth man on the sideline, and we were excited to have that group."

***Q: Can you walk me through your points of emphasis on offense and defense?***

**ER:** "[We were trying to] Get consecutive stops in a row. As long as we were playing defense, we weren't worried about too much. On offense, it was just a matter of time until we started knocking down free throws and shots."

***Q: Tolu, what was your mindset that led to getting 16 rebounds?***

**TS:** "The ball wasn't falling in the hole. So, I had to find other ways to contribute to the game. I had great guys like Eric Reed [Jr.] and Shakeel Moore knocking down shots. Everyone was contributing. Whatever it takes to win I am going to do. Yes, I had 16 boards, but I had four turnovers."

***Q: What excites you about the team's performance tonight?***

**TS:** "I was kind of a main focus for the offense. So, being able to dish it off and make the right reads. Also, having guys like Eric to knock down shots opens it up a lot for us."

***Q: How big were those second chance points/offensive rebounds?***

**TS:** "It is great. Dashawn Davis made a great offensive rebound when I missed a free throw. After he made that, it was a momentum shift to get back on the offensive side and get another opportunity to score. Plays like that to give us a second chance are what we emphasize in huddles and the importance of crashing the glass."

## **Marquette Head Coach Shaka Smart**

### ***Opening Statement***

**SS:** "Mississippi State had a lot to do with our tough start. We knew they were an older well-coached defensive team. We knew that we were going to be playing against five guys on defense. It was not going to be a situation where we could create two-on-two or one-on-one."

"Tolu Smith is such a good player. When he put the ball on the floor, we felt like we had to go double him, and he still was able to score a decent amount. He did get some assists. Mississippi State deserves a lot of credit with how they passed out of traps and double teams. They made some huge three's."